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SOME MEASURES OF THE MUSICAL TRAINING AND DESIRES OF HIGH-SCHOOL SENIORS AND THEIR PARENTS

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The purpose of the study which it is the object of this paper to report was to determine in a general way the attraction that music has for the fourth-year students of the Central High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and more specifically to examine the extent and character of their musical training in public and private schools. It was intended also to measure incidentally the musical tastes, desires, and activities to be found in the homes of these students. Despite the local character of the investigation, the group examined was somewhat representative, it is believed, of high-school Seniors in general, and the results may therefore define a little more clearly the problem of musical education.

To attain the ends stated, a questionnaire was submitted in June, 1921, to the graduating class of the Central High School. This school is made up of students who come for the most part from middle-class homes. The conditions under which the data were gathered were as follows: The 241 students who answered the questions were seated in the auditorium. Though most of the questions called for simple statements of fact, a few asked for opinions, and the pupils accordingly were cautioned against consultation. The questions were read, and the pupils wrote their answers to each question as it was read, indicating the questions on their papers by numbers only. On the last question three minutes were allowed for thought, but on none of the others was more than one minute allowed. All but one of the replies proved to be usable, so that the findings are based on the replies of 240 students, 89 boys and 151 girls.

The following questions were asked:

1. What was your attitude toward music when you finished the grades? Were you very fond of music? Were you indifferent to music? Did you dislike music?

2. What is your attitude toward music now? Are you very fond of music? Are you indifferent to music? Do you dislike music?

3. Of what musical organizations have you been a member during your high-school career?

4. Of what musical organizations outside of school have you been or are you a member?

5. What courses in high-school music, other than chorus, have you taken? How many credits earned?

6. Have you had individual vocal instruction? If so, how much?

7. Have you studied any instrument? If so, what, and how much?

8. What kind of music study, if any, would you prefer to go on with? Vocal? Instrumental? Theoretical?

9. Have you ever considered music as a vocation?

10. Is there a mechanical musical instrument in your home?

11. What musical instruments (not mechanical) are in your home? Which are played?

12. Have you a sufficiently musical ear to hum, sing, or whistle a tune?

13. Have your parents ever advised you to take musical training, vocal or instrumental?

14. Name two or three musical numbers in the high-school auditorium programs which you have enjoyed most.

The replies to Questions 1 and 2 are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I

ATTITUDE TOWARD MUSIC	PERCENTAGE OF BOYS	PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS	PERCENTAGE OF ALL STUDENTS
At End of Grade-School Training			
Fond.....	39	75	62
Indifferent.....	46	25	33
Disliked.....	15	0	5
At End of High-School Training			
Fond.....	78	95	89
Indifferent.....	18	5	10
Disliked.....	4	0	1

There was no way of determining from the results of the questionnaire the reasons for the marked gain in the attractiveness of music. Perhaps it is due to an increased power of understanding music; perhaps it is because the high-school Senior has more contacts with well-rendered music; perhaps the participation require-

ment of their grade-school days made music irksome and unpopular to some. Very likely all of these factors operated, and probably others.

The answers to Question 3, relating to membership in high-school musical organizations, are presented in Table II.

TABLE II

Musical Organizations	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total
Orchestra.....	11	6	17
Band.....	4	1	5
Glee club.....	16	22	38
Musicians' club.....	0	9	9
Total.....	31	38	69

The answers to Question 4, concerning membership in musical organizations outside of the high school, appear in Table III.

TABLE III

Musical Organization	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total
Church choir.....	9	28	37
Orchestra.....	7	5	12
Band.....	2	0	2
American Federation of Musicians.....	1	0	1
Choral club.....	1	8	9
Quartet.....	2	2	4
Thursday musicale.....	0	3	3
Piano players' club.....	0	1	1
Musicians' club.....	0	1	1
Total.....	22	48	70

How many of these 240 students were members of some musical organization in school or out of school? The answer to this question is set forth in Table IV.

Question 5 requires a short explanation. It refers simply to the use which the students make of the plan of the Minneapolis high schools for giving credit for private musical training. By studying music according to a certain graded plan under recognized

private teachers and reporting once a week for harmony class in the high school, pupils can earn in music four of the sixteen units required for graduation. Of the group of 240, thirteen, all girls, had acquired from one to four units of music toward graduation in this way. All were students of piano, except one, a cellist.

TABLE IV

Musical Organizations	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total
In school only.	13	15	28
Outside of school only.	7	25	32
In school and outside of school.	12	18	30
Total.	32	58	90

In reply to Question 6, five boys reported from a fraction of a year to four years and fifteen girls reported from a fraction of a year to three years of voice training.

Question 7 revealed that forty-four boys (49 per cent) had had training for from a fraction of a year to ten years on different instruments. The training of only six was for less than one year. Of the girls, 128 (85 per cent) reported having had training for from a fraction of a year to ten years on different instruments, 121 having been trained in piano. The training of only eight was for less than one year.

Comparing these data with the replies to Question 5, it is surprising and puzzling to note that so many have had private musical training and so few have availed themselves of the opportunity to get high-school credit for it. The reason for this situation was not found, although the remark of one Senior girl is worth recording, "They don't know about the plan for getting high-school credit." Very probably, also, college-entrance requirements and tradition are complementary forces which operate to prevent the student from substituting music for one of the traditional subjects.

In reply to Question 8 the pupils reported their preferences for future musical training as indicated in Table V.

Question 9 revealed that seven boys and thirty-seven girls, a total of forty-four, or 18 per cent of the total, had at some time

considered music as a vocation. Almost every one of these people had had much musical training.

Replies to Question 10 indicated that there were mechanical musical instruments in the homes as follows: boys, 72 per cent; girls, 68 per cent; total, 70 per cent.

TABLE V

Future Musical Training	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total
None.....	18	8	26
Vocal.....	9	18	27
Instrumental.....	56	113	169
Theoretical.....	0	0	0
Instrumental and vocal.....	6	9	15
Instrumental and theoretical.....	0	3	3
Total.....	89	151	240

The tabulation of replies to Question 11 indicated a total of 483 instruments (not mechanical) in the 240 homes. Of this total, fifty-six were not played; and concerning the playing of twenty-five instruments there was no statement. According to positive replies, however, 83 per cent of the instruments were played. It is especially notable that 85 per cent of the homes had pianos.

TABLE VI

Number of Instruments in the Home	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total	Percentage
None.....	13	9	22	9
One.....	25	53	78	33
Two.....	24	43	67	28
Three.....	12	30	42	18
Four.....	5	12	17	7
Five.....	8	2	10	4
Six.....	0	1	1
Seven.....	1	1	2	1
Eight.....	1	0	1

The numerical distribution of instruments among the homes is indicated by Table VI.

The answers to Question 12, "Have you a sufficiently musical ear to hum, sing, or whistle a tune?" are summarized in Table VII. In the case of those answering "No," their answers to Question 2 were referred to. It was found that three of the boys were fond of music and one disliked it, and that eight of the girls were fond of music and two professed indifference to it. These comparisons bear out

TABLE VII

Answer	Number of Boys	Number of Girls	Total
Yes.....	85	141	226
No.....	4	10	14

what is already known, that love of music is not invariably coincident with the possession of musical ability. Of the ten girls, five had had from one to five years of training in piano. None of the boys had had musical training.

Question 13, "Have your parents ever advised you to take musical training, vocal or instrumental?" was answered as shown in Table VIII. Evidently the ability to participate in music is regarded by almost nine-tenths of the parents of the 240 students as a desirable accomplishment.

TABLE VIII

Answer	Percentage of Boys	Percentage of Girls	Percentage of All Students
Yes.....	81	91	87
No.....	19	9	13

The tabulation of the responses to Question 14 presented a number of difficulties. In some cases pupils merely named the person or the organization, as "Mr. —'s solos," "orchestra," and "boys' quartet." In other cases particular selections were named. The frequencies were recorded for organizations and for selections as the students designated the musical numbers that appealed to them, and a classification was then made as indicated

in Table IX. In "Program music" are included such designations as "solos," "band," "orchestra numbers," "glee club," and "boys' quartet." The classification "Ragtime or near-jazz" is applied to all mention of certain marimba solos, marimbasaxophone-violin trios, and male duets, in gaudy, picture-covered sheet music. These classifications are necessarily crude and inaccurate. On the whole, it seems that the weight given to program and classical music should be rather gratifying to the music instructors of the high school concerned.

TABLE IX

Type of Music	Percentage of Boys	Percentage of Girls	Percentage of All Students
Program music	60	58	59
Classical music	23	26	25
Ragtime or near-jazz	14	11	12
Original compositions	3	5	4

Two limitations should be mentioned. First, the natural tendency of pupils to recall the musical numbers most recently given was noticeable. Second, the students were sitting very close together, and they had two or three minutes to think of their answers to this question. There was without doubt some copying.

We have before us a few facts of human desire in music. From the evidence given, what inferences may we draw, and what is their relation to the curriculum of the high school?

In the first place, we must remark upon the comparative universality of the desire for music.¹ The attitude of the students toward music in general, as expressed in the answers to Questions 1 and 2, and the percentages of them who belong to musical organizations, who have studied instrumental music, and who desire future

¹ It is well to remember that the group from which these conclusions are drawn is not as representative of society as a whole as some people may suppose. A study (*The Selective Character of American Secondary Education*, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 19) recently completed by Dr. George S. Counts, of Yale University, indicates that despite the rapid growth of our high schools they are still selective, in the large cities at least. From the evidence he presents there is reason to believe that those with low or medium mental endowment and those from homes most lacking in social and economic advantages have been largely sifted out of the group here studied.

musical training, bear testimony in support of this conclusion. The answers to questions relating to their homes—the presence of musical instruments, mechanical and not mechanical, and the parental attitude toward musical training—testify also to the desire of most of these people for music in their lives. If the extent of demand is any criterion for including a subject in the high-school curriculum, music should be accorded a large place.

The varied expression of musical desires and tastes is a second fact which must impress us as we survey the answers to the questions submitted. For example, the replies to Question 8 show large percentages desiring participation in instrumental music, while the replies to Question 10 indicate that there is satisfaction and enjoyment for many people in simply being auditors of music. Most of the students desire musical training in participation for recreation's sake, but an appreciable percentage ask it for vocation's sake. Obviously, if the curriculum-maker is to make a program suited to the desires and needs of people, there is pertinency for him in the facts of the range and variety of the demand for music as these are indicated by the results of the present inquiry. He cannot answer the demand with a two-year course in chorus-singing.

The third inference we draw from the results of this inquiry is that the students examined have been laboring under a twofold handicap in acquiring a musical education. Expense is the first handicap. All training in instrumental music and in individual vocalization has been secured at private expense. The undemocratic character of such an arrangement is clear. And that this type of training should be thus dependent upon the private purse is the more deplorable in view of the general demand for it. It must appear, as we survey our traditional curriculum, that other subjects with values less evident and desired by much smaller percentages of our population have gained entrenched positions in the school program and are liberally provided for in the public-school budget.

Time is the second handicap. Of the 192 students who had received individual vocal and instrumental instruction, only thirteen had received school credit for it. This means that all but thirteen

carried on their work in music in addition to the burden of a full high-school load. Many pupils are unable to do that. A study¹ made by F. A. Scott showed that 57 per cent of the students in the senior high school at Belmont, Massachusetts, had at some time studied music at home and that 61 per cent of the 57 per cent had dropped outside music study. Of those who had dropped it, 35 per cent said that they had done so because of the pressure of school studies, and 9 per cent because of dislike of the study. He found that the average time per week given by the senior high school music students to lessons and practice was 5.75 hours, not far from what they put on a regular school subject. It is obvious that only the very bright pupils can successfully carry a full load of high-school work and take music lessons at the same time. As explained before, however, this handicap of time has been removed in the Minneapolis high schools by the system of giving credit for outside music, but pupils are not taking advantage of it.

Education of the public and school administrators to the great values of music in the life of the individual, the home, and the community must be the watchword of all who hope to see music assume the place it deserves in a democratic school system. The facts of human needs and desires must be gathered and interpreted and posted for the guidance of our school authorities.

¹ F. A. Scott, "A Study of Applied Music," *School Review*, XXVIII (February, 1920), 112-22.